AFRICA RENEWAL

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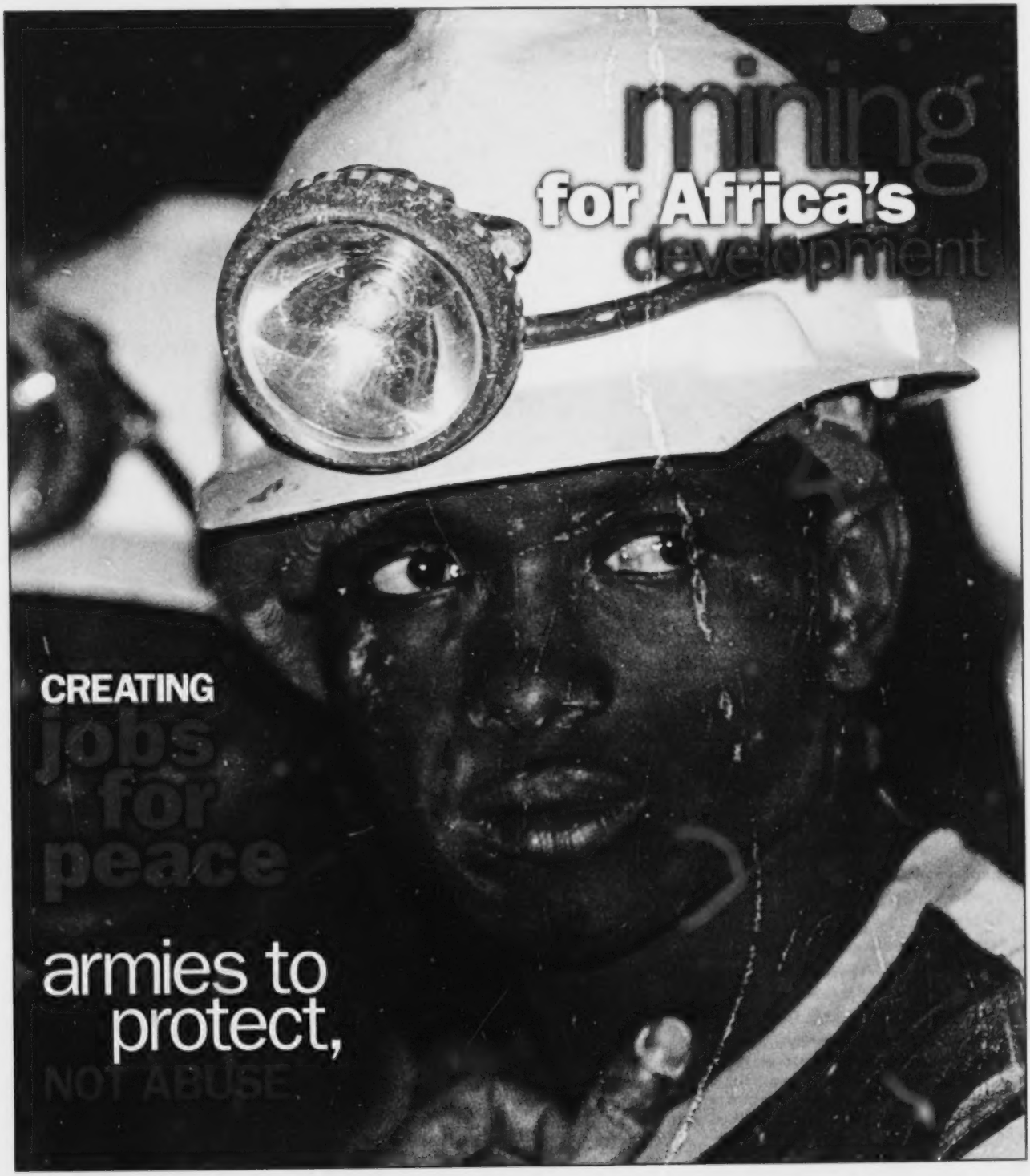

AFRICA RENEWAL

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Relief efforts gear up for Zimbabwe

Donors look for more progress on national reconciliation

By **Roy Laishley**

International humanitarian aid efforts to Zimbabwe to help combat a continuing cholera outbreak and overcome widespread food shortages are intensifying. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also sent a mission to the country in March, the first in more than two years, to discuss with the government its policies for an economy ravaged by plunging revenues, hyperinflation and a collapsing infrastructure.

The moves come on the heels of the establishment of a unity government in February, after months of deadlock following disputed elections last year. Immediately upon taking office, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and Finance Minister Tendai Biti (both of the Movement for Democratic Change) asked for a $2 bn loan package from other members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to help pay wages to health workers, teachers and the police, as well as to support other basic services.

But economic assistance is likely to be slow in coming. The extent of SADC support could be affected by the global economic crisis, which is seriously hitting even the richest members. Funding from the IMF, as well as from the World Bank and African Development Bank, will not materialize until the country's debts to them have been cleared — and approved policies are in place. Above all, economic assistance will depend on further signs of progress on national reconciliation.

Speaking in South Africa on 25 February, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the international community, led by the UN, stands ready to support the people of Zimbabwe. But he cautioned that such efforts "would get stronger and more support from the international community if we can see the promise in political and national reconciliation." Releasing political prisoners is "important and desirable," Mr. Ban said, adding that he hoped they would be freed "as soon as possible."

Food shortages

A UN team, led by Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Catherine Bragg, visited Zimbabwe in late February. It reported that the humanitarian crisis remains grave. Ahead of this year's harvest in April, the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) and international non-governmental organizations are distributing food aid to some 7 million Zimbabweans — nearly 60 per cent of the population — the highest level since the food crisis began in 2002.

Donors have provided more than $240 mn for operations in 2008 and 2009. Even so, WFP reported in February that a growing number of households are reducing their number of meals per day, with over 10 per cent of households reporting that they had not eaten the previous day.

The harvest, while it will bring some immediate relief, is not expected to end the need for substantial amounts of food aid. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned in February that prospects for the new crop are "unfavourable, pointing to another year of serious problems of food insecurity in the country."

Collecting food rations from a UN warehouse in Zimbabwe. Another year of serious food insecurity looms.

Cholera outbreak

Inadequate food consumption, together with appalling sanitation and the near-collapse of the cash-starved health system, have created the conditions for a cholera outbreak. By mid-March, more than 4,000 people had died since the outbreak began last August and more than 90,000 have been infected. Over 90 per cent of Zimbabwe's 62 districts are affected, with most deaths occurring in rural areas, where only limited or no treatment is reaching the local population. In January the death rate reported by local communities was three times that within health facilities, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

More aid to Zimbabwe's health system would help end the cholera outbreak. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided $5 mn in January and in March Australia announced it would give more than $6 mn to restore water, sanitation and health services.

By mid-March the death rate in cholera cases had fallen to 1.8 per cent from over 5 per cent in January, WHO reported. With proper care, the death rate is normally below 1 per cent. The rate of infection also seemed to be easing, WHO said, with the number of new cases in the first week of March well down from the previous week. However, the situation remains precarious, with a nurse in Harare telling the UN-supported Integrated Regional Information Network news service that "the storm is far from over." ■

Mining to profit Africa's people

Governments bargain for "fair deals" that enhance development

By **Mary Kimani**

Mineral-rich countries in Africa enjoyed a mining boom between 2002 and 2007 as metal and oil prices nearly tripled. Companies competed furiously for new mines to meet growing world demand. As a result, a number of African nations found themselves in a much stronger bargaining position with foreign investors, who previously were able to demand — and get — huge breaks before they would invest. Now governments could strike better deals with new investors, and even renegotiate old mining contracts. "We just want to make sure that we are getting the best [deal] for our deposits," Alhaji Abubakarr Jalloh, Sierra Leone's minister of mines, said in September 2007.

But since then, amidst a global economic downturn, world metals and oil prices have fallen substantially, raising concerns that investors will once again shy away, and to some extent undercutting Africa's bargaining power. Zambia, for example, had hoped to impose windfall profit taxes on copper mining to finance an infrastructure fund, but shelved those plans after copper prices plunged from $9,000 to $3,000 a tonne.

Though richly endowed with mineral and oil deposits, Africa has generally drawn little benefit from that wealth. Mining and oil profits have long gone abroad or been squandered, leaving many people in poverty. But the emergence of more democratic and accountable governments, along with agitation by communities and civil society groups, has contributed to efforts to better harness mining for development.

'Negotiate fair deals'

So despite the recent fall in world prices, African countries will likely continue to bargain for better contracts. The goal is not just to ensure higher national revenues, but also to address long-standing community concerns about environmental pollution and compensation for people displaced by mining operations.

Large mining operations in Africa have generated big profits for foreign companies, with little local benefit. Now governments are trying to harness more mining revenues for development purposes.

Most mining contracts in Africa were negotiated in the 1980s and 1990s when low world prices and high political risks discouraged foreign investments in the continent's mining sector, observes Festus Mogae, the former president of Botswana, a country widely regarded as one of Africa's most successful mineral exporters. Speaking at a meeting of the Africa Development Bank (ADB) in December 2008, he noted that previously African countries had to entice investors by granting incentives such as extensive tax and royalty exemptions. Consequently, many countries earned very little from such contracts. "That is why it is necessary to renegotiate some of them," he said. "We should use our best endeavours to negotiate fair deals with multinationals."

But reviewing mining contracts is important for more than earning greater revenues. Governments are also responding to pressures from civil society groups and communities to ensure that contracts and mining codes address environmental protection, adequate compensation to affected communities and the rehabilitation of land after mining operations have ceased.

Ibrahim Aidara, the West Africa extractive industry programme coordinator for the UK-based non-governmental group Oxfam, notes that few countries have proper mechanisms to regulate the impact of mining on communities. Even where environmental and compensation laws are in place, they are rarely enforced. So companies spend very little in compensation or on post-mining clean-up efforts. Local communities, moreover, often have little say in how mining contracts and codes are formulated, even though their livelihoods are the most affected. Nor do governments have adequate mechanisms for reinvesting mining revenues in development programmes.

"Mines are a public resource and the negotiations between countries and companies should be transparent, accessible and easily understandable by citizens," Mr. Aidara told *Africa Renewal*. "Communities should be able to review mining contracts, find out how much revenue has been generated and how, and on what it is being spent, and have access to information about all other impacts of a

mining operation."

Reviewing contracts

Partly in response to such concerns, and despite the recent decline in world mineral prices, governments are continuing to press for reviews of old contracts and to be more demanding in negotiations for new ones. "Most of our policymakers now understand that their national economies are not benefiting from mining and that to do so, it is important to have good policy in the sector and be more transparent," says Mr. Aidara. "They understand that they have to reform. This is a good start."

Tanzania has made some progress in this area. In the past, gold- and diamond-mining investors often received tax concessions lasting up to 20 years. So while mining accounted for nearly half of Tanzania's exports, the total taxes paid by all the mining companies combined amounted to less than the tax paid by a single local company, Tanzania Breweries.

To address the problem, Tanzania set up an 11-member committee of government officials, mining experts and civil society representatives to look at how to make mining contracts work better for all. The committee's recommendations were used in renegotiating existing agreements.

Subsequently, Tanzanian Minister of Energy and Minerals Nazir Karamagi announced to Parliament that mining companies AngloGold, Barrick and Resolute had agreed to pay annual levies equivalent to US$200,000 directly to local governments in the areas where their mines were located. The funds would be used for community projects. An additional $125,000 annually would be paid to an "empowerment fund" to finance national development projects. The companies would also be required to buy local products and services where these are available, instead of importing them.

Civil society support

Governments are reaching out to civil society groups in attempts to better respond to community concerns. In April 2008 the secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) invited Oxfam to help facilitate civil society participation in the drafting of a new regional mining code. "When we have the regional mining code ratified," explains Mr. Aidara, "it will be binding for all the member countries, and will supersede all existing national codes." He notes that the new code would standardize compensation and environmental rules, eliminate contradictions and align the mining codes of all 15 ECOWAS countries.

But better contracts alone may not be enough to ensure that citizens of resource-rich countries benefit from their natural wealth. According to Paolo Desea of the World Bank, speaking at a meeting of African mining officials in Guinea in early 2008, widespread poverty in these countries often has less to do with bad contracts than with a "lack of clear laws for national governments [on how] to distribute the money."

Guinea illustrates the problem. Mining companies there are legally obliged to pay a tax to the owners of the land on which they mine. They are also required to support local development projects. But civil society representatives, in a June 2008 interview with UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, pointed out that hundreds of thousands of dollars paid as taxes to support development in Guinean villages rarely reached the communities themselves. They cited the case of Russian bauxite-mining company ACG-Rusal, which over three years gave $100,000 in development assistance to a local prefecture. But the 25,000 citizens of Mambia, the village where ACG-Rusal operates, received only a single small payment, in 2006. Mambia remains without electricity or piped water.

More transparency

Former President Mogae of Botswana acknowledges the problems of corruption and poor management of Africa's mineral resources. "Some of our countries' individual leaders use their access to financial resources from extractive industries to advance their own personal agendas, instead of using them in the best interest of the nation as a whole," he said at the December 2008 ADB meeting.

Burkina Faso's former Minister of Economy and Finance Jean-Baptiste Compaoré agrees. But he adds that countries such as his are taking steps to avoid such pitfalls. Burkina Faso has recently joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Launched in 2002 by the UK prime minister, the initiative requires members to publish all data on revenues from mining and oil operations. By joining the EITI, Mr. Compaoré said in June 2008, "Burkina Faso has

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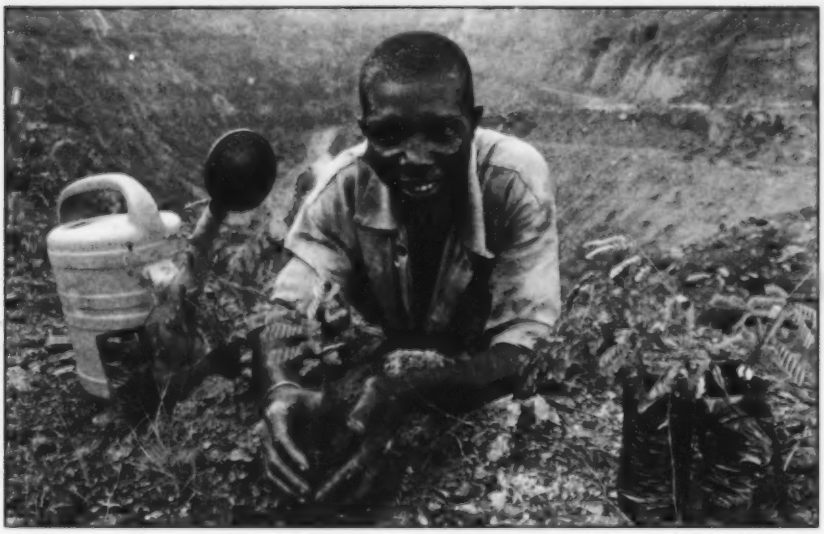


Peter Arnold, Inc. / Ron Giling

Planting new trees near a manganese mine in Ghana. Many mining companies are now obliged to compensate for any environmental damage they may cause.

Reforming Africa's security forces

For armies and police that protect citizens, not abuse them

By **Ernest Harsch**

"Liberia is building a new army and we are very strict regarding its standards," says Lieutenant Eric Dennis, who teaches international humanitarian law to recruits. In a country where previous armies — government and rebel alike — committed widespread atrocities, he hopes to help build a new institution that "will never tarnish the image of our army and our country. We want an army of professional soldiers."

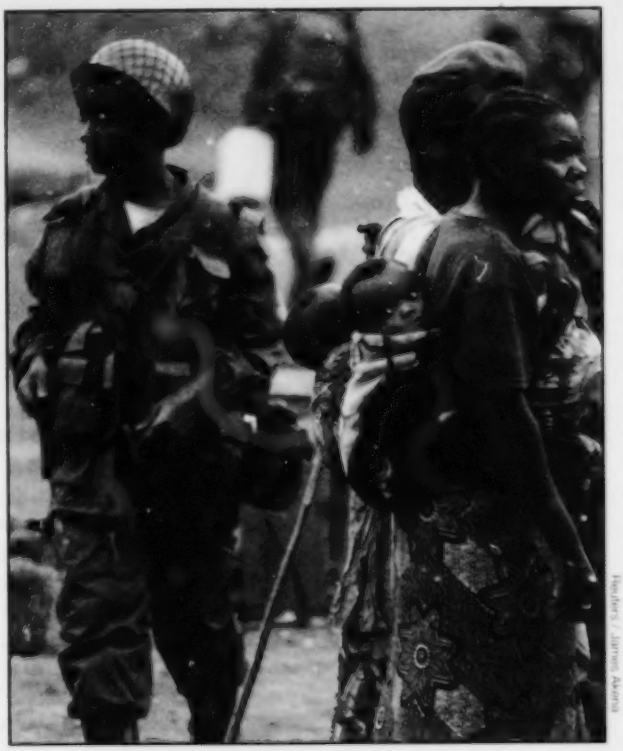
Recruitment for the new army began only in 2006, and its 2,000 troops — some 100 of whom are women — are still being trained. Liberians are cautiously optimistic. A February 2008 opinion survey found that 55 per cent of Liberians polled expressed confidence in the army. That was less than the level of confidence in the national government and election system, but more than for the country's banks or courts.

A few thousand kilometres away, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), creating a new military is proving to be a more troubled process. Although UN peacekeepers and European advisers have sought to professionalize the force, there still have been incidents, especially in the troubled eastern provinces, of looting, rape and other abuses by troops.

"We soldiers are a reflection of the people, and therefore we must conduct ourselves so that the people see themselves in their army," Lieutenant Colonel Georges Mukole told a group of Congolese officers. But that image, he admitted, is still "being fashioned."

From South Africa to Burundi and Côte d'Ivoire, a number of other countries in Africa are also seeking to restructure and professionalize their armies, police and intelligence services. The process is fraught with difficulties, but is increasingly seen as vital for the continent's long-term peace and stability.

The momentum for such reform is growing as more countries seek to consolidate democracies or rebuild after debilitating wars, notes Major General Carl Coleman, a former commandant in Ghana's armed forces. Previously, political elites used their armies and police primarily to maintain power, "without any regard for the people that they governed," he told *Africa Renewal* in an interview at the Accra, Ghana, offices of the African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR), a pan-African non-governmental think tank, where he is now a senior analyst. But in Africa's new democracies, "security" is now being redefined to place "people at the centre."



In Africa's new democracies, reformers are seeking to create armies that protect civilians and uphold human rights.

From problem to solution

For too long, General Coleman and others have pointed out, Africa's militaries, police and intelligence agencies were a major source of conflict and insecurity for ordinary Africans. Sometimes poorly paid, their ranks robbed and extorted civilians simply to get by. Presidents and other politicians used their armies to put down popular protests or eliminate rivals. And frequently, military commanders staged coups to take the reins of power themselves.

In Africa, as elsewhere, says UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "Security forces that are untrained, ill equipped, mismanaged and irregularly paid are often part of the problem, and perpetrate serious violations of human rights."

With little civilian oversight or public accountability, soldiers and police routinely were able to get away with the worst abuses. In some countries, notes retired Major General Ishola Williams, secretary-general of the Nigerian chapter of the anti-corruption advocacy group Transparency International, security institutions became part of a "culture of impunity and violence."

In a number of countries that have emerged from civil wars or long periods of dictatorship, reformers are seeking to break with the past. Usually as part of broader moves to democratize political systems, they have taken steps to restructure their security forces and subject them to the control of elected civilian governments.

"Security sector reform" (SSR) is the term most commonly used to describe such initiatives, although there are others. Whatever the variant, the concept of "security" extends beyond just "hard-core" institutions, such as the army and police, explains General Coleman.

Preferably, the courts, prison systems and civilian oversight bodies such as government ministries and parliament, should also be part of the reform process. "All of it is intertwined. You can't do one to the neglect of the other." The ultimate aim, he says, is to ensure the creation of security forces that guarantee "the protection of the ordinary person."

In a January 2009 ceremony, more than 100 new female police officers take their oaths in Liberia.

Emerging from war

Most African countries could use some degree of security reform, argues Kwesi Aning, head of the conflict prevention department of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra, which instructs military and police personnel from across the continent. Even in Ghana, he told *Africa Renewal* during an interview at his KAIPTC offices, the army and police do not coordinate very well in handling local disputes, as in Ghana's strife-ridden Bawku region in the north. "Even in non-conflict societies, there is a need for much more effective oversight of security institutions, and for coordinating and consultative mechanisms."

However, the impetus for fundamental reform has usually been greatest in countries just coming out of war. In Sierra Leone, efforts to restructure the national army began in 2000, even before that country's decade-long civil war came to an end the following year. With significant funding from the UK and under the command of British officers and technical experts, the programme sought to restructure the armed forces from top to bottom.

In a number of countries that have emerged from civil wars or long periods of dictatorship, reformers are seeking to break with the past. Usually as part of broader moves to democratize political systems, they have taken steps to restructure their security forces and subject them to the control of elected civilian governments.

The military was especially weak at the command level, with many of the most professional officers either dead or in exile, "so we had to grow this almost from scratch," Major General Jonathon Riley, the UK commander, later recalled. Meanwhile, the UN's peacekeeping mission helped to train the police.

The situation in Sierra Leone has remained relatively calm since then, including during the sharply contested election of September 2007. Not only did the security forces not interfere on behalf of the ruling party, as had happened frequently during the period from the 1960s through the 1980s, but they supported a smooth transition in power after the opposition won. Currently, the authorities are planning to reduce the army's size from 10,000 to 8,500.

In Angola, after nearly a quarter-century of civil war, peace was finally established in 2002. Tens of thousands of fighters from both sides of the conflict were disarmed and demobilized. Significant forces from the former rebel group were incorporated into the national army, and one national police force was created.

Burundi's national army and police were restructured in stages, after opposing armed factions in that country's civil war signed an initial peace agreement in 2003. Numerous government and insurgent combatants were demobilized, but many former rebels were also incorporated into the regular security forces. Plans to reduce the combined strength of the army and police from 25,000 to 15,000 have stalled since April 2008, however, as another rebel faction awaits incorporation.

In Côte d'Ivoire, a peace agreement in 2007 established a new coalition government and outlined plans for reintegrating the country, creating a unified army and holding national elections. But the disarmament and demobilization of combatants has proceeded slowly, and differences have arisen over how to forge a unified national army and police force.

Plans for security reform have also been discussed in a number of other countries, including the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau. But continuing political instability, reflected most dramatically by the killings of Guinea-Bissau's president and army commander in early March, has forestalled serious restructuring.

And in countries where some security reform measures have been initiated, they usually have not been well coordinated with other post-conflict steps, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes for ex-combatants seeking to return to civilian life (see *Africa Renewal*, October 2005 and October 2007). At a June 2007 international conference on DDR organized by the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, an entire session was devoted

to promoting better coordination between DDR and SSR operations.

South African transformation

One of the most far-reaching and successful military restructurings in the continent took place in South Africa. It was so fundamental and sweeping that South Africans prefer to call it a "transformation," not just a reform. Previously the South African army, supported by several pro-government ethnic "homeland" military forces, concentrated on defending the country's white supremacist political system against movements for liberation among the African majority. But with the end of apartheid and the first democratic election in 1994, virtually all government institutions were slated for overhaul.

The guiding principle of South Africa's new approach, according to a 1995 defence strategy, was to ensure that the military, police and other security institutions took as their "paramount concern" the "security of people," to protect their freedom, peace and safety. Not only was that orientation radically different from that of the previous security system, it could only be realized through changes to these institutions' "racial, ethnic, geographic and gender composition," notes Major General Roland de Vries, a key figure in the early defence transformation process.

Accordingly, a new South African National Defence Force (SANDF) was created, starting in 1994, through the integration of seven different armed forces: the guerrilla wing of the victorious African National Congress (ANC), a smaller liberation group, the regular army of the previous regime and four "homeland" armies. That process was accompanied by steps to strengthen civilian control, including the establishment of parliamentary oversight and the "demilitarization" of the Ministry of Defence. The country's various police forces were similarly unified, as was the court system.

With further restructuring and training in subsequent years, the SANDF and the national police have been crafted into highly professional forces dedicated to combating crime and other forms of insecurity at home and contributing to African and international peacekeeping operations abroad. According to the late Colonel Rocky Williams, a former commander in the ANC's military wing, a number of factors contributed to the relative success of this transformation: a strong state, a robust economy and "the fact that South Africans themselves managed the transition."

UN Photo/ Marie Frechon

South African peacekeeping troops in the Congo: After a thorough restructuring, South Africa's armed forces are now oriented towards defending democracy at home and peace abroad.

Congolese minefield

As in South Africa, the conflict in DRC ended with an agreement among belligerents to bring their forces toget into a new national army. But the res so far have fallen short. As Congol Minister of Defence Charles Mwar Nsimba acknowledged in January, army remains riddled with "widespr indiscipline at all levels, links with cri nals, violence against women and the version of soldiers' pay."

The war in the DRC had been es cially destructive, and it was also compl involving numerous domestic facti and the armies of a half-dozen neighbo ing states. In 2002 the main contend signed a peace agreement. It establishe power-sharing transitional government included a commitment by the factions demobilize some troops and merge the into a single army. After some delays, country's first democratic elections w held in 2006.

The new constitution specified that " armed forces are republican. They are the service of the entire nation." Accord to Professor Mwayila Tshiyembe Congolese expert in international military affairs, this notion of an army does not only protect the government, that also "defends democracy" and "gu antees the security of people and proper was the most innovative idea to come of the peace accords.

Unfortunately, during the transit period partisan infighting led each f tion to exaggerate the numbers of troops. Many of these numbers were ac ally fictitious. Surveys by South Afri and European advisers later elimina 130,000 "ghost soldiers" from the ini rolls of 340,000. Some 75,000 real tro were also subsequently demobilized.

More seriously, there was very li screening of troops. They included co manders of factions suspected of w crimes, and their patterns of behavi have carried over into the new army.

Unsteady 'integration'

Creating unified structures for the n army proved especially troublesome. theory there were to be 18 "integrat brigades, in which troops from the dif

ent factions were merged, retrained and then posted to areas outside their home zones. This process, known by the French term *brassage* ("intermixing"), was intended to break down the old chains of command and forge loyalty to the new national institution.

General Gabriel Amisi, head of the army's ground forces, told assembled troops in August 2008 that they should not resist serving outside their home areas. "There are no soldiers of Katanga or soldiers of Kivu. You are all troops in a national army."

But some did not see it that way, especially in the eastern DRC. General Laurent Nkunda, a civil war commander, initially brought his troops into the army, but resisted their full integration or deployment to other areas. He claimed they had to remain in North and South Kivu to defend his ethnic group. As tensions revived, troops loyal to General Nkunda's Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) deserted their "integrated" brigade in 2006 and resumed armed actions, including against government forces.

With such incidents in mind, Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye, force commander of the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC), remarked to *Africa Renewal* in 2007 that the decision at the peace talks to amalgamate the different groups into a single army "was a really good idea" for ending the war. "But unfortunately, it didn't produce a good military."

In October 2008 fighting between the national army and General Nkunda's CNDP escalated into major confrontations. Some army units rapidly crumbled, and only a prompt deployment of MONUC peacekeepers prevented General Nkunda's fighters from taking Goma, the capital of North Kivu.

General Nkunda was arrested in Rwanda in late January, paving the way for a ceasefire. The government started talks with the remaining CNDP forces on their incorporation into the army. Father Apollinaire Malumalu, a leading Congolese mediator, welcomed the integration move as a possible step towards peace. But he also insisted that protecting civilians must come foremost and cautioned the authorities to not "fall into the errors of the past."

UN Secretary-General Ban, during a visit to the eastern DRC at the beginning of March, also urged care. He cautioned that no one accused of sexual violence "be integrated into the national army or police."

Meanwhile, MONUC instructors and other experts have stepped up the professionalization of the army's integrated brigades, in addition to improving the discipline of the national police. Hundreds of army officers have been trained in civilian-military relations and combating sexual violence. Enhancing the military's public image somewhat, hundreds of troops of the army engineer corps have been mobilized for reconstruction projects, to rebuild roads, bridges and other essential infrastructure.

> **"Security forces that are untrained, ill equipped, mismanaged and irregularly paid are often part of the problem, and perpetrate serious violations of human rights."**
>
> **– UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**

The abuses by government troops during the Kivu fighting have also met with a prompt response. A number of soldiers and officers were tried and sentenced by military courts, some to life in prison. The army prosecutor in Goma reported in December 2008 that some 400 troops were under detention awaiting trial. There have been several cases elsewhere in the country, including of officers accused of embezzlement.

At a January seminar on reforming the army and police, Minister of Justice Luzolo Bambi Lessa emphasized the need to strengthen both the chain of command and the military courts in order to "quickly eradicate the flaws of corruption, embezzlement of state funds, sexual violence and violence against vulnerable civilians." The Congolese national police force has adopted a guiding "vision" statement committing the police to protect human rights in the country and vowing to sanction any police personnel who engage in abuses.

Liberia: small and professional

Like the DRC, Liberia suffered through years of devastating war, with numerous armed factions vying against each other. And as in the Congo, multiparty negotiations in 2003 established a transitional government in which most of the main groups were represented.

But there was one crucial difference: the peace agreement did not call for amalgamating the existing groups into a single army, but essentially for fashioning an entirely new armed forces. While the US was asked to "play a lead role" in training the new military, peacekeepers of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) took on the restructuring and reforming of the national police.

The building of a new army did not actually begin until 2006, after democratic elections replaced the coalition transitional administration with a new government headed by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. By that point, more than 100,000 fighters from the old factions had gone through a disarmament and demobilization programme directed by UNMIL. More than 14,000 more were slated for demobilization from the old national army and the Ministry of Defence.

The peace accord had stipulated that the soldiers of the new Armed Forces of Liberia "may be drawn from" the previous armed groups, but as individuals and only if qualified. When recruitment began in January 2006, more than 12,000 Liberians applied — for a force of just 2,000 troops.

The selection criteria were very rigorous. To be accepted, applicants not only had to be physically fit, but needed to have had at least 12 years of schooling. "Vetting" panels assessed each candidate's suitability. This included eliminating anyone involved in past human rights abuses. Recruiters travelled to the candidates' home communities to verify their records and encouraged the public to come forth with information about them. Ultimately, three-quarters of all applicants were rejected. More failed the initial training courses.

The recruitment drive also sought some ethnic and geographic balance, contrary to previous military forces, which often favoured one ethnic group or another. The government hoped that 20 per cent of the

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After war, creating jobs for peace

Unemployment challenges stability in Liberia, Sierra Leone

By **Roy Laishley**

It was just a small loan worth the equivalent of $100, from a UN-supported local microfinance bank. But it enabled Mojamah, just returned to her home in Kenema, Sierra Leone, after the country's civil war, to set up a dressmaking business to support her family of six.

In neighbouring Liberia, Amelia, a single mother with five children, received a loan of $83 to help expand her work crushing rocks, which are then used in road building. The loan, from the Peace Fund established by the regional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), worked so well she applied for another, worth $200, to contract workers to blast additional rocks to help meet the growing demand from rehabilitation projects in post-war Liberia.

Generating decent and sustainable livelihoods for Africa's poor is at the heart of the continent's development plans and the ultimate goal of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the blueprint adopted by African leaders in 2001. Achieving that goal, however, has proved to be profoundly difficult, especially so in countries struggling to recover from years of civil strife.

Resettling refugees and displaced people and demobilizing and reintegrating combatants were the first priorities for the new elected governments of both Sierra Leone and Liberia. With impoverished and disaffected youth predominant in many of the armed groups that had ravaged their countries, both governments were clear on the potentially lethal consequences of failing to provide employment for those aged between 15 and 35. It is a simple equation: "If they have an alternative, they do not fight," says Andrea Tamagnini, who heads up the reintegration, rehabilitation and recovery arm of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Today, generating employment, particularly for youth, is a central element in the poverty reduction strategies being implemented by Liberia and Sierra Leone. Both countries have enjoyed steady growth in recent years, but economic opportunities remain limited. As a result, the numbers of those unemployed or underemployed — that is, in jobs that keep them from rising above the poverty line — remain stubbornly high, at some 70–80 per cent of the work force. Generating jobs for all, not just ex-combatants, is crucial to continuing peace and stability.

Associated Press / Sarah Dia

Job seekers filling out applications in Monrovia, Liberia: In countries just emerging from war, finding employment for disaffected young people is essential for preventing a slide back into conflict.

Emergency employment

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes have benefitted some 70,000 ex-combatants in Sierra Leone and more than 100,000 in Liberia, as well as many displaced people. Assistance has taken a number of forms: cash handouts, skills training and short-term employment, usually in public-works projects (see *Africa Renewal*, October 2005 and April 2007).

"There were problems on many levels — political, social, funding," recalls Francis Kai-Kai, who headed up Sierra Leone's National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. Funding was often in short supply and programmes also had to deal with the trauma suffered by many ex-combatants. Many in their home communities were deeply angry over the violence and atrocities committed during years of war, and resentful that perpetrators were being unjustly "rewarded" for their violence.

To counter this perception, cash handouts and training were presented not as rewards, but as a humanitarian contribution to young people who themselves had often been abused and deprived of their chance for schooling or to learn skills. "We were trying to make a level playing field for them," Mr. Kai-Kai says. But, he concedes, beneficiaries were more often

than not being "reintegrated into poverty."

Vocational training was a key element in the package provided to the more than 50,000 beneficiaries of Sierra Leone's reintegration programme. But according to "Overview of DDR Programmes and Current Practices," a paper prepared for an international conference on DDR in Africa organized by the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) in July 2007 in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo: "The sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life ... particularly male youth, has been stymied by low levels of economic growth, a lack of employment opportunities and poverty."

The programme in Liberia faced similar problems. In the latter part of 2006, two years into the reintegration phase of the DDR operation, a UN survey found that some 28 per cent of the 60,000 beneficiaries reported that they were unemployed, while only 8 per cent said they had seen a rise in their standard of living.

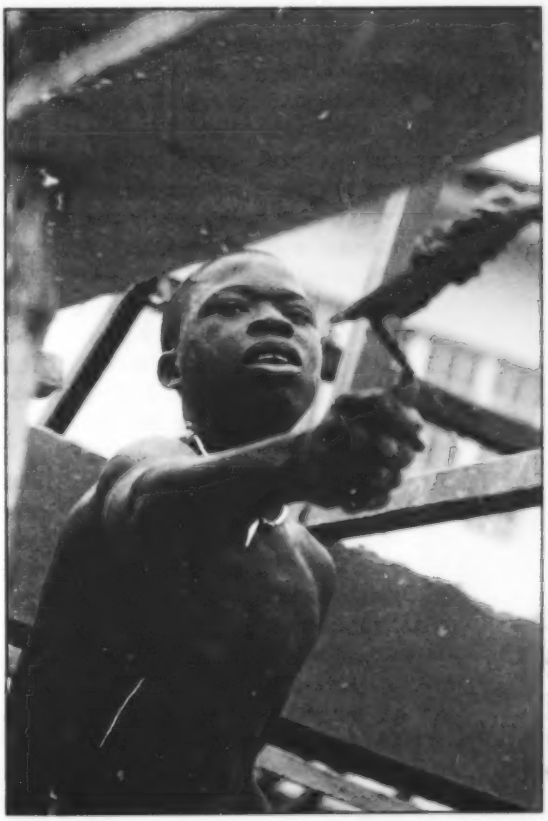
While more recent surveys show improvements, the continuing high number of unemployed or underemployed youth "remains a particular concern that could be used by spoilers seeking to undermine stability," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned in a February report on Liberia to the Security Council. In January, Mr. Ban voiced similar concerns about Sierra Leone.

Complicating matters in both Liberia and Sierra Leone is the possible impact of unrest in neighbouring countries on a mobile and unsettled youth population. Mr. Tamagnini of UNMIL points to evidence that road repair schemes in Liberia's Lofa County, bordering Guinea, had helped frustrate such recruitment there.

Between 2006 and 2008, over 60,000 people were employed in Liberia's "Infrastructure for Employment" programme, rehabilitating the country's main road arteries. Carried out over two dry seasons, the programme created an estimated 2 mn working days and injected some $6 mn in cash payments and food into the local economy. Importantly, the programme was not limited to ex-combatants, who made up only 30 per cent of those employed. Another quarter were returned refugees or displaced people and 45 per cent were from local communities. More than one in five were women.

Participants at an OSAA-sponsored conference on youth employment in Windhoek, Namibia, in 2005 argued that while early employment schemes in Liberia had enhanced the skills of ex-combatants, there was too little emphasis on job placement linked to wider government employment strategies.

Mr. Kai-Kai points out that the employment element of DDR was a short-term programme designed "to help calm the situation" in the immediate post-war period, as the economy slowly picked up. Such employment, Mr. Tamagnini agrees, is "the 'peace dividend' for poor people." But reflecting the views of many, he also argues that maintaining job creation programmes over "several years" is essential for successful peacebuilding.



Applying cement at a construction site in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Secure jobs are often very scarce.

Trying for the longer run

The biggest challenge, Mr. Kai-Kai and Mr. Tamagnini agree, is shifting to the promotion of long-term, sustainable employment for all. This is particularly relevant in Liberia, where the final phase of the reintegration programme — and the cash it provides — ends in April. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is providing some $3.5 mn to help continue the road repair programme, switching the focus from dry-season repairs to year-round maintenance, with execution by local communities. Ex-combatants are being encouraged to return to their communities.

Mr. Tamagnini does not underestimate the challenge. "Liberia's economy simply doesn't offer enough jobs for everybody," he points out. Both Liberia and Sierra Leone are feeling the impact of the current global economic slowdown. In Sierra Leone, diamond and rutile mining operations have been hit by falling prices and other factors, leading to job losses. In Liberia, the spectacular fall in rubber prices on the world market in recent months has forced wage cuts and layoffs at some plantations, sometimes prompting violence.

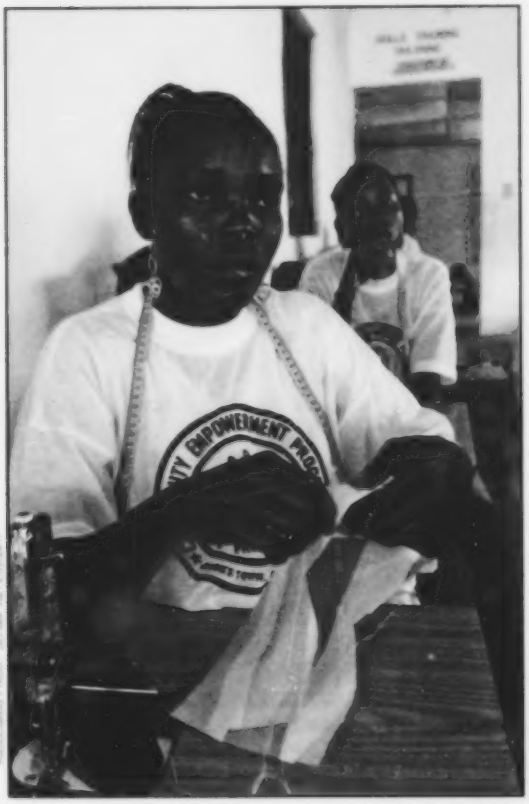
Employment generation, particularly for youth, is central in the poverty reduction strategies adopted by both countries, as they are across Africa, as governments struggle to find the right strategies to create jobs.

The Sierra Leone government's blueprint for the next three years, Agenda for Change, presented by President Ernest Koroma in December 2008, views youth unemployment as one of the three main and immediate risks to peace and security, along with corruption and illicit drug trafficking. The government estimates the country will need to create over 200,000 jobs a year.

The picture is similar in Liberia, where unemployment in the formal sector is some 80 per cent. "Job creation is a top priority," declares the country's Development Assistance Framework for 2008–2012.

Both Sierra Leone and Liberia are beneficiaries of the UN's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Some $4 mn of the $35 mn allocated to Sierra Leone has been targeted for youth employment. In Liberia, $6 mn of the $15 mn allocation is for a broad-range of livelihood-boosting projects.

Reflecting the importance of employment- and income-generation programmes in post-conflict countries, the UN set up a task force, with UNDP and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the lead, to strengthen implementation and "scale up" such projects. "We need to build scale, to make sure programmes are not just drops in the ocean," says the ILO's Claudia Coenjaerts.



Associated Press - Schalk van Zuydam

A Liberian ex-combatant at a sewing class, to improve her skills in a tight job market.

Enterprise-led development

In Sierra Leone, the PBF's loans for youth employment support the government's efforts to promote sustainable livelihoods through business development. A recent World Bank study, "Youth and Employment in Africa," concluded that providing financing and advice for entrepreneurship is particularly effective.

Today, small groups like the Community Empowerment and Development Agency (CEDA), the Association for Rural Development and Hope Micro, many of them linked to international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) long active in outreach to poor communities, are handling some $2.8 mn in PBF funding to assist upwards of 13,000 young people. Projects include tailoring, trading, construction and bike and vehicle repairs. Loans for taxi bikes — known as *okadas* — have been particularly successful. Owners can earn up to $15 a day, says Patrice Lamboi, a programme officer with the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), enabling them to pay back a start-up loan within six months, with a chance to get a further loan for a second bike to expand the business.

Taxi bikes have similarly been a source of earnings in Liberia. A project run by YMCA Liberia in the northern town of Ganta has been so successful that a proposal is going before the PBF to extend it to other towns.

The Ganta scheme has had close involvement with local youth associations. One of the main complaints voiced by youth representatives at OSAA's Windhoek conference was the lack of consultation with potential beneficiaries and local leaders. In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, aid efforts are being focused on building up local council and community organizations to help them determine and allocate funds for development.

Building local capacity

Having the right local arrangements and capacity is crucial, argues Mr. Kai-Kai. He warns that this will have to involve strong and clear national leadership. Employment has to be central, Ms. Coenjaerts argues, adding that it has to be part of an integrated approach across sectors, with adequate local capacity to implement it.

But ensuring effective coordination across ministries and other national bodies, all with limited capacity, can bedevil speedy implementation. In Sierra Leone, of the $4 mn approved for the PBF's 18-month youth employment schemes in May 2007, over $1 mn was still waiting to be allocated to projects in December 2008, to the frustration of local youth groups. The pace of approvals is now accelerating.

Local capacity and clear regulation are particularly important for microfinance efforts, which are playing a key role in more and more African countries. Studies carried out in Liberia and Sierra Leone by UNDP found a far higher demand for small loans than existing institutions could meet.

In both countries the central banks, working with donors, have developed policies to promote microfinance development. In January 2009 a new microfinance entity, Access Bank, opened its doors in Liberia. Partially owned by the African Development Bank, the European Investment Bank and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, it has start-up capital of $6 mn and aims to serve 27,000 customers by 2013. It will join other entities, such as the Local Employment Assistance Programme (LEAP), Liberty Finance and Ecobank, which are also expanding with the help of donor funding.

Aiming higher

According to Kenyeh Barlay, an adviser with UNDP's microfinance programme in Liberia, many loans go to women's groups, especially those involved in trading activities. Liberty Bank reports that more than 90 per cent of its clients are women. Most loans have been for people in urban areas or living along major road arteries. The scale and pattern of microfinance lending is similar in Sierra Leone.

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, executive director of the African Foundation for

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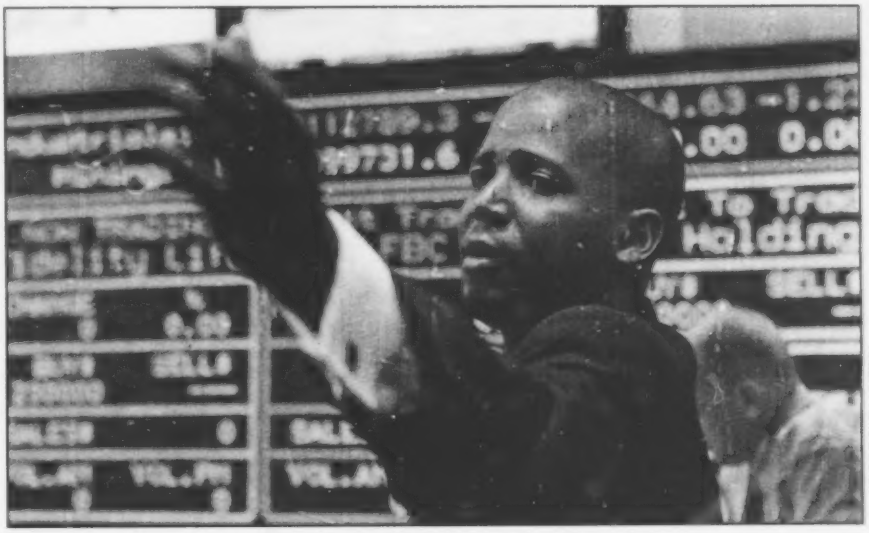
World downturn squeezing Africa

Calls for more aid, greater voice in recovery plans

By **Roy Laishley**

As the world's economic woes deepen, Africa's leaders are delivering a strong message to the international community that it must help the continent protect the development gains of recent years. Ahead of the April meeting of the Group of 20 (G-20), a high-level consultative body, African leaders met with its host, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, in mid-March to tell him that donors must honour their commitments to increase aid, improve trade access and agree to a fairer, more flexible system of managing international financial affairs.

With a global stimulus package on the G-20's agenda, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi appealed to the self-interest of richer countries. He argued that in the long run "the global stimulus impact of every dollar spent in Africa is higher than if it is spent in the US or UK." If the crisis is allowed to worsen, he warned, there could be total chaos in some countries and the cost of the resulting violence "is going to be much higher than the cost of supporting Africa." The World Bank has urged developed countries to devote 0.7 per cent of their stimulus packages to a vulnerability fund for developing countries not able to afford similar stimulus measures.



Reuters / Siphiwe Sibeko

An African stock exchange: Although the initial impact on Africa of the global financial crisis was limited, the slowdown in the world economy is now seriously affecting Africa's own growth prospects.

'The greatest danger'

The current crisis "poses the greatest danger ever to Africa's development," Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete told a 10–11 March conference on African development in Dar es Salaam. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is now predicting the global economy will fall into recession this year, with economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa forecast at best to be barely above 3 per cent — only half the average of the past decade, with a real risk that millions of people will be thrust into deeper poverty (see box, page 14).

At the Dar es Salaam meeting, African leaders reconfirmed the need to strengthen economic policies and ensure good governance. But in return they called on donors to urgently increase their aid, not cut it as during previous crises. Moreover, they pointed out, the amounts required are tiny compared to the stimulus packages in many developed countries.

Africa's development partners must deliver on their commitments, UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro (a former Tanzanian foreign minister) told the meeting: "What we don't need is more promises." According to some estimates, only 14 per cent of the extra $50 bn in annual aid for Africa by 2010 promised by the industrialized countries' Group of Eight at its 2005 summit has been delivered.

'Safety net' needed

The meeting also stressed the importance of trade, warning that any turn towards protectionism would only deepen Africa's problems further. There must be a "level playing field on trade and the removal of subsidies that penalize Africa," as well as "a continental safety net to support those sliding into trouble," Kofi Annan, chair of the Africa Progress Panel, an advocacy group, said in his keynote address.

"We thought we were safe from the impact of the crisis on the financial sector," Nigerian Finance Minister Mansur Muhtar said in Lagos in March, "but today, no country is safe."

Mineral and oil exporters have been hit particularly hard. Copper prices are down over 60 per cent. Oil, at around $40 a barrel, is at a fraction of its highs of over $140 less than a year ago. Prices for rubber, cotton, palm oil and timber are also well down. In Tanzania the number of tourists, a significant source of earnings, is expected to fall by as much as 18 per cent.

Shrinking world demand is translating into mounting unemployment, with the mining sector particularly badly affected. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), estimates of the number of miners thrown out of work in the last six months range between 200,000 and 300,000, with a further 1 million people feeling the indirect impact.

African families are also seeing less money coming in from members working abroad. The recent growth in such remittances slowed notably last year, and flows

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Africa faces up to global turmoil

The continent is now stronger, says UN's Cheick Sidi Diarra

As evidence mounts that the international economic crisis is provoking a deep and prolonged downturn in the world economy, Africa is feeling more and more of its negative effects, says UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa Cheick Sidi Diarra. Most seriously, Mr. Diarra explains in an interview with *Africa Renewal*, the global slowdown is reducing the prices of commodity exports, "the main basis of African economies." Developed countries are also likely to "give priority to their own internal markets," contributing to a decline in foreign direct investments in Africa and other developing regions.

In trade, the tendency of governments in the richer developed economies to subsidize their domestic farmers has for some time undercut the ability of African exporters to compete in world markets. A few African countries, Mr. Diarra says, are now complaining that members of the European Union (EU) are beginning to increase such subsidies even more.

For the time being, Africa's 33 least developed countries (LDCs) continue to enjoy preferential access to markets in industrialized countries, which allow 97 per cent of all LDC exports to enter without duties or quotas. But as the rich countries grapple with their crises, "this policy might be reversed," Mr. Diarra worries. "We don't wish it. But these are things one should expect. There might be more protectionism." (In addition to his position as special adviser on Africa, Mr. Diarra is also the UN's high representative for the LDCs, landlocked developing countries and small-island developing states.)

Loading cargo on a ship in Cotonou, Benin: There are fears that Northern protectionism may further hinder Africa's ability to earn more from trade, notes Mr Diarra.

Solidarity, North and South

Although some African leaders have raised concerns that the continent's Northern donor partners may reduce their development aid in order to shift limited financing to their own domestic priorities, Mr. Diarra has not yet seen any sign of that happening. "On the contrary," he says, "I was assured" that aid commitments would be met.

During an international conference on "financing for development" in Doha in November–December 2008, he reports, President Nicholas Sarkozy of France reaffirmed the EU's pledge to provide the equivalent of 0.56 per cent of gross domestic product in official development assistance (ODA) by 2010, and 0.7 per cent by 2015. Japan, the US and other members of the industrialized countries' Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development have similarly promised to meet the targets they previously pledged to Africa.

Meanwhile, Africa is benefiting from a more diverse range of international relationships, Mr. Diarra points out. China, India and other countries in the global South have in recent years emerged as important new development partners for Africa. Because their economies have been growing very strongly, they have established "sovereign wealth funds" in order to invest not only in their own economies,

Shrinking growth forecasts

Just a year ago the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted that the gross domestic product (GDP) of sub-Saharan African countries would grow an average 6.7 per cent in 2009. Then in October 2008 it reduced its forecast to 5.1 per cent. By January a deepening world economic crisis led the Fund to cut its forecast yet again, to 3.5 per cent. And by March the best forecast for 2009 growth was 3.25 per cent, with the IMF warning that growth could fall still further.

The African Development Bank (ADB), meanwhile, is forecasting average growth of 3.2 per cent in 2009 for all African countries, compared with the estimated 5.75 per cent in 2008. For sub-Saharan Africa, it is predicting 2009 growth of 2.6 per cent, against 5.55 per cent in 2008. Highlighting the continent's financial constraints, the ADB expects that African countries will move from an overall budgetary surplus equivalent to 1.8 per cent of GDP in 2008, to a deficit of 5 per cent in 2009.

but also "in other developing countries, even in the developed countries."

Some countries in the South have provided access to technologies "which are most adaptable to the needs of the continent." They have also agreed to open up their markets, on preferential terms, to exports from LDCs and African countries.

Moreover, Mr. Diarra emphasizes, an alliance between Africa and other developing regions makes it easier for African nations to be heard in the international financial institutions and other world arenas. "The voice of Africa by itself is not strong," Mr. Diarra admits. "But when the voice of Africa is supported by India and China, it carries very far."

On firmer footing

The greatest source of Africa's strength lies within, Mr. Diarra suggests. In recent decades important reforms have been carried out in both the political and economic realms, providing a framework for more secure societies and more vibrant economies.

"Political governance has improved," Mr. Diarra says. "We are witnessing more and more stable countries, fewer coups d'etat, more democratic transitions."

He cites the continent's innovative African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which has had a "real impact on the ground." Initiated under the umbrella of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), adopted by African leaders in 2001, the APRM is a voluntary process whereby participating countries assess each other's efforts to promote democracy, human rights and sound economic management.

More must be done, Mr. Diarra adds. National policies and strategies need to be defined from the "bottom up," through inclusive dialogues that involve all sectors of society. "That's important," he says. "It shouldn't be decisions imposed from outside, or decisions imposed from the elites." Only by soliciting inputs from the grass roots will it be possible to identify "the daily life hardships of the population."

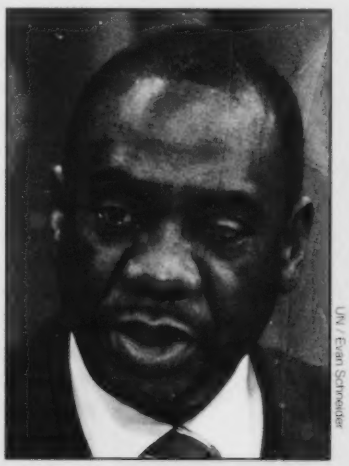
Economic reforms

Over the past two decades most countries of sub-Saharan Africa have carried out economic reforms, including those promoted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In most cases, these "structural adjustments" were "socially very painful," Mr. Diarra acknowledges. But in the long term the reforms "helped Africa to get macro-economic equilibrium, which is a good basis on which to build sustainable economic development."

African countries have also strengthened their legal systems, giving greater confidence to domestic and foreign investors alike. It is important, Mr. Diarra says, to have "transparency in doing business, having a clear legal framework and playing by the legal framework that exists, not playing another game."

Greater efforts are needed to fight corruption and to avoid the flight of capital into foreign bank accounts, Mr. Diarra adds. Moreover, it is important "to protect the interests of the country against the interests of the multinationals," or at least to make those interests more compatible. There must be codes of conduct to ensure that foreign corporations operate in a socially responsible manner and safeguard the environment.

African countries have often competed fiercely to attract foreign investors, not only by strengthening their legal systems and improving their investment codes, but sometimes also by overlooking certain harmful practices. "It's true that the countries that most need to attract foreign direct investment are lenient on rules, regulations, social safety nets and environmental protection. We have to do something about that."



UN / Evan Schneider

"When the voice of Africa is supported by India and China, it carries very far."

— Cheick Sidi Diarra

Infrastructure and agriculture

Responding to frequent criticisms within Africa that the continent's development plan, NEPAD, has demonstrated few tangible results, Mr. Diarra responds: "NEPAD has made great progress since its adoption. It's not visible for the time being." Much time and effort has been spent developing programmes for Africa's different economic and social sectors, involving governments, African regional institutions and international funding agencies. The process of identifying priority initiatives and estimating their costs "is almost completed," he says. "Now, the toughest part remains: the funding of the different projects and programmes." He cites infrastructure — roads, ports, power grids, water systems and new information technologies — as a key priority, for which donors have established an Infrastructure Consortium for Africa to help mobilize financing (see *Africa Renewal*, January 2009).

Agricultural development, especially increasing the continent's low levels of food productivity, is another priority, Mr. Diarra affirms. According to NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, each African country should commit at least 10 per cent of its budget to agriculture, in order to raise farm productivity by an average annual rate of 6 per cent. "To tell you the truth, not many African countries are doing that so far," he laments.

But there are also positive examples. Malawi, Mr. Diarra says, took "a very bold initiative to provide farmers whatever they need as inputs," with the government subsidizing the costs of fertilizer and high-yield seeds (see *Africa Renewal*, October 2008). Within two years, harvests increased so dramatically that Malawi was transformed from a recipient of emergency food relief to a contributor of cereals to the UN's World Food Programme. "So, will it be sustainable?" he wonders. "I don't know. But this is definitely the way to move forward." ■

Does financing benefit African women?

New initiatives to track the gender impact of development funds

By **Michael Fleshman**

Decades after the world officially recognized a human right to gender equality, women remain largely excluded from the upper ranks of government and business, earn less than their male co-workers and face an array of customs, traditions and attitudes that limit their opportunities. Are governments, businesses and the international community putting money behind their resolutions calling for women's advancement? Are international aid budgets, government funds and private sector resources being spent in ways that narrow economic, social and political inequalities between men and women?

Das Fotoarchiv / Charlotte Thege

Few women in Africa work in regular, formal sector jobs, and even those generally earn too little to escape from poverty.

The answer, notes Jacinta Muteshi, chair of the Kenyan government's Commission on Gender and Development, is generally "no." While there has been some progress in women's political representation, advances have been limited in the economic realm and for poor women in particular. That is because disadvantages "are often anchored in social institutions, macroeconomic policies and development strategies that have not adequately recognized that women are important agents of economic development and poverty reduction," Ms. Muteshi told *Africa Renewal*.

The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in its 2008 report *Progress of the World's Women*, agrees that "progress for many women, particularly the poorest and most marginal, has been far too slow." In a few countries, including Rwanda and South Africa, there has been an increase in the number of female parliamentarians and other elected and appointed officials. But UNIFEM notes that women will not reach parity with men in legislatures in developing countries until at least 2047 at present rates of increase.

Poverty's female face

Economic parity is even further away. In employment, the report asserted, gender bias has meant that "women have been more concentrated than men in informal, subsistence and 'vulnerable' employment," that is, self-employment and jobs without salaries in family-owned businesses. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), more than 67 per cent of African women work in agriculture, mostly as smallholder subsistence farmers. Fewer than 1 in 5 working women in sub-Saharan Africa receive regular wages or salaries, compared to a third of employed African men and almost 93 per cent of women in the developed North.

Even for the minority who do earn wages, a paying job is unlikely to offer an escape from poverty. Although a lack of data prevents the ILO from calculating the gender gap in earnings between men and women in sub-Saharan Africa (globally women's pay currently averages 83 per cent of men's), it does report that over half of all African wage and salary earners make less than $1 per day, the commonly accepted measure of absolute poverty.

The percentage of African wage earners making less than $2 per day exceeded 86 per cent in 2006, a share that is virtually unchanged from a decade ago, despite relatively high growth rates in recent years. In the view of labour economists, the high number of people classified as "working poor" points to considerable income inequality in Africa, as well as the continued failure of African economies to generate good jobs for both men and women.

But the extra obstacles faced by women struggling to work their way out of poverty are suggested by the World Bank. Its latest Enterprise Survey found that in both the public and private sectors, only 1 in 26 salaried African women was employed in a senior management position, compared to 1 in every 6 men. That lack of opportunity at home contributes to a far higher percentage of college-educated African women, nearly 28 per cent, going overseas in search of employment, compared to 17 per cent of educated men.

A stacked economic deck

The UN Development Programme and others estimate that as many as 70 per cent of the world's poor are women. In almost every respect, Ms. Muteshi argues, the economic deck is stacked against women. Citing UN estimates, she notes that women worldwide account for two thirds of all working hours and produce half the food, but earn just 10 per cent of the world's income and own less than 1 per cent of the world's property.

First and foremost, she says, this gap reflects "the absence of women in economic leadership." African women are only rarely

present among senior officials at central banks or ministries of finance, planning or trade. "The same can be said of women's representation in the private sector."

Economic growth has created employment for women in developing countries in such labour-intensive industries as clothing, shoes and electronics assembly. But these are also industries in which wages and working conditions are notoriously bad.

Employers in labour-intensive businesses often prefer women as they are seen to have fewer economic options than men and are therefore willing to accept poorer wages and working conditions. Women workers are also less likely to be members of trade unions than men.

Following the money

In the 1980s, women's rights advocates began to scrutinize public budgets to understand how financial flows affected women. Activists initially focused on the area of most importance to women, government spending. By analysing public finance through a process known as "gender budgeting" (see *Africa Renewal*, April 2002), they hoped to ensure that women benefited fairly from national spending decisions and to improve the budget-making process itself.

In a December 2007 report to the UN Commission on the Status of Women on financing for gender equality, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that 50 governments around the world, including several in Africa, used gender budgeting methods to help set spending priorities. Morocco has established gender budgeting methods as part of a broader reform of its budgetary spending process.

There also have been efforts to put a price tag on gender inequality. Mr. Ban's report estimates that the equivalent of between 0.1 and 0.3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) is lost every year from failure to "promote gender equality and empower women." That goal is the third of eight internationally agreed development objectives known as the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs).

The goal includes a specific commitment to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2015. Achieving this in poor countries, the report estimates, would require an increase in annual spending on gender equality programmes from an estimated $8.6 bn in 2006 to nearly $24 bn by 2015. The World Bank estimates the cost of achieving full economic and social equality between the sexes at $83 bn per year by 2015.

Aid and accountability

Recently, UNIFEM and women's groups have expanded their focus on budgets to include other financial flows, including official development assistance (ODA), loans and international trade. UNIFEM reports some progress on aid, in part because many donors in the industrialized countries' Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) now track financing specific to gender as part of their overall efforts to improve the delivery of aid to developing countries.

Between 2002 and 2006, the OECD reports, aid for programmes designed at least in part to promote gender equality rose from $2.5 bn to $7.2 bn, and the amount of aid screened for its impact on gender rose from $15 bn to $26.8 bn. But the group also reports that such "gendered" aid was overwhelmingly concentrated in the social services. Only $1 out of every $4 in ODA for infrastructure and directly productive activities like mining, manufacturing and farming was spent on projects that included greater gender equality as a goal.

Such broader efforts to improve the effectiveness of aid have created political openings for activists to push for better financing for women's equality initiatives. But UNIFEM notes that financing for dedicated gender-equality projects represented less than 5 per cent of total OECD aid in 2006.

UNIFEM argues that it is important to also introduce concrete targets and goals into reform plans. That would help policymakers and civil society groups design programmes that are more responsive to gender concerns.

Governments that receive aid must also do better. In recent years donors have begun to channel a greater percentage of aid to poor countries through general budgetary support, instead of allotting aid for individual projects. A recent study by the OECD's Network on Gender Equality found that such "programme" funding leaves decision-making with recipients' finance ministries. "These ministries often are unaware of ... gender equality as a development issue, as are many staff on the donor side."

Growing cassava: Donors should direct more aid to farming projects that involve women.

Liberalization policies

Ms. Muteshi of Kenya thinks the problem goes even deeper. "Current neo-liberal economic structures are disadvantageous to women in general," she asserts. That is because a narrow emphasis on GDP growth fails to recognize "the gendered nature of our economic lives." The liberalization theories that influence many development strategies, she notes, tend to push women into "precarious, exploitative, unregulated and temporary forms of

work" in the informal sector.

Even increases in donor support for sectors that benefit African women, she notes, such as health and education, are often made without women's involvement, thus keeping them on the margins economically and politically.

There has been some good news, Ms. Muteshi acknowledges. Women have benefited from microfinance loans, which are now available in most African countries. However, she adds, "the amounts remain small and have rarely been scaled up in ways that truly strengthen women's economic power. It is time to provide women with credit that moves beyond 'micro.'"

Ms. Muteshi argues that the greatest problem with donor programmes in Africa is that they generally do not invest in sectors especially important to women. In agriculture, she observes, "African women provide approximately 70 per cent of the workforce and grow about 90 per cent of the food, yet it is a sector that has seen little real investment directed towards women."

Richard Lord

A small shop owner in Ghana: The greater availability of micro-credit has helped women improve their businesses, but larger loans must also become available

Trading for equality?

Trade is another potentially import source of finance for gender equality, but efforts to assess its impact have been hampered by inadequate information and research. The overall effect, however, appears to be no better than mixed. Access to the US market through that country's Africa Growth and Opportunity Act helped create jobs for women in the African textile industry in the 1990s. European trade reforms also benefited some African women producers by lowering tariffs on some speciality products.

But following liberalization of the textile trade at the World Trade Organization in 2005, many textile plants relocated to Asia. Meanwhile, European Union barriers to African farm produce, the export sector most important to women, remain formidable.

More broadly, trade liberalization has not succeeded in dramatically expanding opportunities for women. African exports remain heavily concentrated in commodities, particularly energy and minerals, and in a few commercial agricultural products such as coffee and tea. These are sectors in which women are poorly represented.

African women's efforts to include gender equality and poverty reduction rules in global trade agreements have been largely frustrated by the refusal of many major trading countries to consider human and social rights in trade negotiations. African women have had some success in working with Northern civil society "fair trade" groups to counter specific injustices. UNIFEM cites a case in which Kenyan women growing fresh flowers for shipment to the UK were able to secure higher wages and better working conditions by pressuring buyers with the aid of London-based activists.

Agenda for action

In the struggle for economic equality, UNIFEM asserts, there is mounting evidence that African and other poor women remain "at the margins of formal economies." Securing the resources women need for equality, the organization says, is "mission critical" to Africa's development plans. It will require fundamental changes in the way power and wealth are distributed. Such changes include:

- Empowering women politically, including through the use of quotas for elected and appointed offices
- Ensuring that commitments to increase development aid are fully achieved, and that such external financing is assessed for its impact on gender equality
- Making sure that women are at the table when economic priorities are set
- Accelerating progress towards the MDGs' gender equality and health and education targets
- Regulating markets to ensure that women can participate fully and fairly in economic life.

For Ms. Muteshi, a major change is needed in the way the world thinks about women and economics. "Women are almost exclusively responsible for care and reproductive work and the unpaid economic activities in the household," she concludes. "Under current definitions of labour, this daily work of women has been underestimated or excluded from national accounts."

Current initiatives for women's empowerment and gender equality are too narrowly focused, Ms. Muteshi argues. "They do not adequately address the root conditions that produce inequality." Until the world learns how to value the work women actually do, "we leave women vulnerable to poverty, violence and powerlessness." ■

Reforming security

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recruits would be women, but could not find enough applicants — the proportion is currently around 5 per cent.

For transparency and ownership

While many Liberians applaud the goal of building a professional army that will not prey on civilians, certain aspects of the initiative have stirred controversy. A number of security analysts have questioned the decision to build an army of just 2,000 troops. That may be sufficient in the short term, while UNMIL continues to maintain basic security, but what happens when the peacekeepers leave? Will such a force be able to contain a new insurgency or guard Liberia's borders, in a region that has known numerous wars and conflicts?

According to Thomas Jaye, a senior researcher at the KAIPTC who prepared an assessment for Liberia's Governance Reform Commission, "the decision to train 2,000 soldiers for the army was influenced by the purse and not by any threat assessment." General Coleman of the ASDR, referring to donor-directed security reform initiatives more generally, said: "They want to see it done, but they want to do it only cheap."

The US government's decision to subcontract the training of the new army to two private US security companies has also brought criticism, in part because the details of those contracts are secret. "A lot of money has been spent," President Johnson-Sirleaf told researchers for the International Crisis Group, a non-governmental think tank based in Brussels. "We do not know what on. There's simply not enough transparency and accountability in the way this money is spent."

Some also point to the absence of public consultations to help identify Liberians' views about the types of security structures they would like. The Governance Reform Commission, which advises the government on broad reform initiatives, has expressed concern over "the lack of participation of civil society and the national legislature in the SSR process."

Amos Sawyer, head of the commission and a former interim president, notes that technical training, however proficient, will not by itself create the kind of army Liberia needs. He recalls that "every armed group that plundered Liberia over the past 25 years" had troops that were trained by US experts. The real problem was political. To ensure that the new army and other institutions are under effective political control and serve the interests of the nation, his commission insists on more "local ownership" of security reform efforts.

A UN peacekeeper instructs Congolese troops. Training has also sought to promote human rights awareness and counter sexual violence.

Widening the debate

That is an issue that extends well beyond Liberia. Proponents of reform generally agree that broad national consultations should help shape SSR programmes and build public support for them. But in the difficult conditions that usually prevail after war, when new governments are struggling to get on their feet and address the many challenges of economic and social recovery, public discussions on military or police reform have been rare.

Security reform advocates argue that government officials and military commanders in Africa should no longer be suspicious of public scrutiny of security arrangements. Similarly, General Coleman of the ASDR urges African civil society groups to become more actively engaged. "Civil society has a critical role to play," he says. But to avoid stirring resentment, he adds, they should proceed with some tact, "without being too hard on the government and without appearing to be the tool of an external [donor] agency."

The UN, which is working to better coordinate its own support for security reform efforts in Africa and other parts of the world, seeks to promote wide consultations. "SSR models are too often imposed by external actors," says Assistant Secretary-General Dmitry Titov, who heads the peacekeeping department's Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions. "Should we not focus on the end recipients of SSR, that is, the population, the societies and governments living in insecurity? Shouldn't it be *their* ambitions and vision driving SSR efforts?"

Africa itself must take greater initiative, insists Major General Martin Agwai, a Nigerian officer who served as deputy force commander of the UN peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone. "African nations must stand up and accept the torch of responsibility for transforming their own security sectors," he argued in 2003. "Africans must kick-start this process themselves, and the assistance of the broader international community will follow." ■

Fair mining deals

from page 5

undertaken to ensure transparency in the exploitation of its mineral resources and the use of resources arising from them." This, he hopes, will "maximize the positive development of the mining sector on growth and the fight against poverty."

In theory, publishing all data on mining revenues and on what mining companies pay to governments should make it possible for citizens and development experts to track how much of th th is being used to help reduce poverty. This, it is hoped, will encourage transparency and accountability on the part of governments and mining companies. Sixteen African countries, including Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone have joined the initiative.

A woman carries her son from a Mozambican health clinic, partially funded by the Australian mining company BHP Billiton: Across Africa, more mining projects include direct benefits for local communities.

Mining after war

Transparency is especially difficult in countries coming out of war. Civil society activists often cite the mining industry in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In March 2007 a coalition of more than 100 international and local Congolese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) demanded that the government "renegotiate, revoke, or cancel" disadvantageous mining contracts that had been signed during the war or under the transitional government that was in power from 2002 to 2006. The NGOs claimed that three of the largest contracts approved by the transitional government had "collectively signed away over 70 per cent of the government's most valuable copper and cobalt reserves to international companies." None were negotiated in a transparent manner, the NGOs assert.

A month later the new government — which came out of the first democratic elections at the end of 2006 — set up an inter-ministerial commission to examine more than 60 mining contracts. It finished its work in October 2007, but did not published the results until March 2008, after concerted lobbying by the NGOs. The commission's report recommended that all the reviewed contracts be renegotiated to increase the government's stake in the mines — and thus the state's share of earnings.

But environmental degradation, compensation for people affected by mining operations, and post-mine recovery concerns were not addressed. NGOs also protested the fact that a task force set up to oversee implementation was staffed entirely by government officials. Given the history of corruption and lack of transparency in the Congo's mining sector, the NGOs argued that the task force should have included independent and international legal experts, as well as members of civil society.

'Sanitize the industry'

Since civil war ended in Sierra Leone in January 2002, various governments have sought to start operations on the country's first industrial-scale gold mine and increase investment in bauxite and iron ore. But disputes over multiple licences granted by various authorities during the conflict and after have hampered the process. "We ... need to sanitize the whole industry," President Ernest Bai Koroma, who was elected in 2007, told reporters. "We hope to lay to rest all of the difficulties we have in this mining sector and open it up, because it has a huge potential."

In neighboring Liberia the government has just completed a review of major mining contracts, including one with the iron-mining company Arcelor Mittal of India. The revised contract removed clauses exempting the company from Liberian environmental and human rights law, removed certain tax holidays and enforced compensation and property rights for people living in areas affected by the mines.

Patrick Alley, director of Global Witness, an NGO that campaigns for better mining contracts, says that such reviews are vital. "Predatory and unfair investments in natural resources in developing countries, especially post-conflict countries, set back development," he says. "It is good that the Liberian government brought Mittal back to the negotiating table, and good that Mittal renegotiated the contract. In countries coming out of wars that were fuelled by natural resources, [bad] deals like this are playing with fire."

Promoting development

African countries have been through cycles of high and low metal and oil prices before. Previously, bad contracts, mismanagement, corruption and poor investment of windfall revenues continued to leave populations poor and economies undiversified even after bountiful times. Turning this situation around, experts say, will require greater transparency, improved planning for the use of revenues and better partnerships among companies,

Jobs for peace

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Development (AFFORD), a UK-based NGO that is heavily involved in Sierra Leone, argues that microfinance schemes only go so far. Loans are generally too small. Instead, he urges reaching the "missing middle," larger loans that can help clients expand their businesses enough to have a real impact on jobs and wider economic activity. Mr. Chikezie insists that only larger-scale private-sector activities can generate sufficient long-term employment for countries like Sierra Leone.

AFFORD is helping the government to develop a private-sector development strategy for 2009–2014 focused in large part on improving conditions for business. It has also set up business-support centres in Freetown and other towns to provide entrepreneurial, accountancy and other training to people wanting to start or expand businesses. In both countries the ILO provides kits on "expanding your business" and other tools designed, as Ms. Coenjaerts puts it, to increase the "employability" of people.

Former combatants get farm training in Liberia: Agriculture has the potential to create many jobs.

Return to farming

However, even if such efforts bear fruit, not enough jobs can be created without the revival of the countries' agricultural sectors, experts agree. A recent study by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization found that Liberia's agriculture has considerable potential for providing jobs and income, but it needs to be commercialized and its productivity must be raised. The ILO is supporting efforts to build local capacity to carry out rural market assessments. And this year the government is seeking to attract donor funding for investment in small-scale agriculture. Mr. Chikezie cites the example of sorghum growing in Sierra Leone to supply the local beer industry.

But nobody is underestimating the scale of the challenge. Mr. Barlay concedes that despite successes in expanding microfinance, small-scale agriculture remains an uncertain market for enterprise-based lending, given that the risks are perceived to be higher and the prospects lower than in other sectors.

"Nobody is selling farming as a business. A lot of people are running away from agriculture here," observes one Liberia-based official. "People have to be brought back to cultivating the land," another adds.

Meanwhile, the threat posed to peace and stability by youth unemployment remains. In his January report on Sierra Leone, Mr. Ban argued that it is "the most acute concern" among the country's main challenges, calling for urgent action to reduce "the lingering effects of marginalization of the country's young people."

Mr. Kai-Kai concurs that such marginalization of a major segment of the population represents a common challenge for countries emerging from conflict. For him, the solution "is all about governance," with efforts to involve youth placed truly at the forefront. While building local capacity is vital, it must be accompanied by "bold ideas, boldly managed by bold people," he argues.

With both Liberia and Sierra Leone now feeling the heat of a global economic downturn, both Mr. Kai-Kai and Mr. Chikezie argue that it is very important for governments to make a difference for people struggling to survive. ■

Fair mining deals

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governments and communities.

In Burkina Faso, gold-mining companies such as Cluff Mining of the UK, the Australian conglomerate Metal Mass and the Canadian-owned Société d'exploitation minière d'Afrique de l'Ouest (Semafo) are already actively involved in helping the country better channel revenues from natural resources to local populations.

Elie Ouédraogo, the national director of Semafo, told local media that his company recognizes that a mine is a finite resource. "We must think about the post-mine phase," he said. "We must act to ensure that people living close to the mine, do not face desolation.... We will certainly give the fish to local people, but we will also teach them how to fish," he said, recalling a popular proverb. To meet this goal, Semafo is working with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), NGOs and local communities to put together a sustainable development plan. Near its Mana gold mine, in the western part of the country, it is also building two villages of 425 houses, with meeting rooms for youth people and women, places of worship, schools, wells and roads.

Such cases give reason for optimism that Africa will come out of the current price decline much stronger than it did in previous cycles. "Resource-rich countries have been using their windfall profits to scale up outlays on infrastructure and social services, and they've also been saving a lot more than in previous episodes," says Abdoulaye Bio-Tchane, president of the West Africa Development Bank and a former director of the International Monetary Fund's Africa department. "In contrast to earlier commodity booms, this time around Africa has been coping remarkably well." ■

World downturn

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are expected to actually fall in 2009.

Worsening economic prospects and a far more cautious attitude by investors has led to a flight of capital from many countries. Foreign investors withdrew some $4 bn from the Nigerian capital market in 2008, according to the Nigerian Stock Exchange's Director-General Ndi Okereke-Onyiuke.

The International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the World Bank, reports that in 2008 some 450 investment commitments were cancelled in African infrastructure projects, a key sector for the continent's development plans.

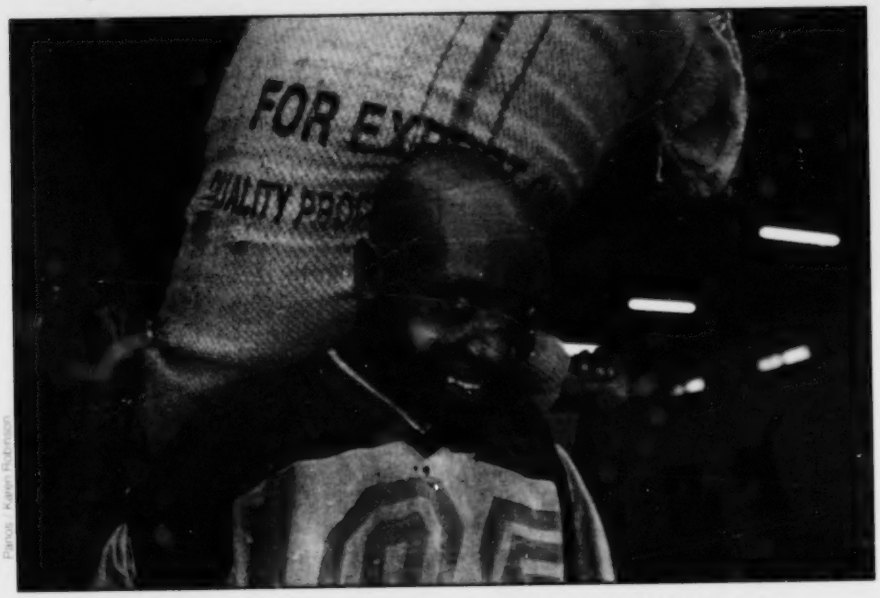

Photo: Karen Rubinson

Carrying a sack of "export quality" coffee in Uganda: The global economic downturn is depressing prices for many of Africa's export commodities.

All this means that governments have far less money available for their budgets, at a time when costs are rising. Oil and food prices may be falling on world markets, but local currencies have also been depreciating, sometimes at a much faster rate. Zambia's kwacha is down 60 per cent over the past six months, making imports more expensive.

What started out as a financial crisis is now threatening to become a humanitarian one. Reduced growth this year will mean that average incomes in Africa, already pitiful, will take a 20 per cent hit, according to Kevin Watkins, one of the authors of a report by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Education for All Global Monitoring team.

Walking a tightrope

Most African countries "must walk a tightrope" between preserving hard-won gains from economic reform and trying to protect the poor from the worst impacts of the downturn, the IMF says. Few African countries are in a position to spend their way out of trouble, warns African Development Bank (ADB) President Donald Kaberuka. "We do not have the same fiscal space as developed countries to pump-prime the economies via massive spending," he told a summit meeting of the African Union in February.

While debt levels are generally down, finding willing lenders has become more difficult and borrowing costs are on the rise. Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tunisia and Uganda have all postponed plans to raise funds on international capital markets.

This predicament makes fast-disbursing official aid flows particularly important for ensuring the success of the balancing act facing most African countries. According to the IMF, the 25 low-income countries — 13 of them African — that are "especially vulnerable" to any further global economic downturn will need at least $25 bn in emergency funding this year.

By March, five African countries — the Comoros, DRC, Ethiopia, Malawi and Senegal — had drawn financing from the Fund's Exogenous Shocks Facility, designed to help countries hit by external events. The World Bank has also made some $2 bn available for emergency funding, with the DRC its first recipient.

In a move away from its normal project and development lending, the ADB has established a $1.5 bn emergency liquidity fund for countries' short-term financing needs, as well as a $1 bn trade finance initiative to help African banks and other financial institutions maintain operations. Altogether, the ADB expects to increase its lending to some $11 bn.

A greater voice

African leaders are not asking only for more urgent funding. They also want a seat at the table when plans are made for economic recovery. South African President Kgalema Motlanthe is Africa's only representative in the G-20. Africa needs "a rightful voice in the shaping of the global financial system and the responses to the current crisis," President Kikwete told the Dar es Salaam meeting.

"Africa must be fully represented in the evolving global architecture," said the Dar es Salaam statement. This should include a further strengthening of Africa's voice in the IMF, which must increase its support for Africa with more financing, greater flexibility and enhanced policy dialogue.

Such calls for reform mirror many of the recommendations of a commission of experts established by UN General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto, to prepare for a conference in June on the development impact of the world economic and financial crisis. According to the commission's chair, Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, there needs to be a global stimulus response that is fair, adequate and with "no conditionality attached," as well as long-term measures including new international lending facilities and better global financial monitoring. ■

AFRICA AGENDA

4–8 April 2009, Snowbird, Utah (USA) — The Future of Biofuels Conference. Organized by Keystone Symposia, a US non-profit, to highlight research efforts. Contact Yvonne Psaila, tel +1 970-262-2676, e-mail <yvonnep@keystonesymposia.org>, website <www.keystonesymposia.org/9D4>

20–24 April 2009, Geneva (Switzerland) — The Durban Review Conference. To evaluate progress towards the goals set by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. Contact Doune Porter, tel +41 22 928 9595, website <www.un.org/durbanreview2009/>

4–9 May 2009, Abuja (Nigeria) — Association of African Universities 12th General Conference. Tel +233 21-774495/761588, fax +233 21-774821, e-mail <info@aau.org>, website <www.aau.org>

6–8 May 2009, Kampala (Uganda) — Information Society Technology (IST) Africa 2009 Conference and Exhibition. Focusing on applied ICT research. Hosted by the government of Uganda and supported by the European Commission. Tel +353 1 8170607, fax +353 1 8170606, e-mail <secretariat@IST-Africa.org>, website <www.ist-africa.org/conference2009/>

18–22 May 2009, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) —34th Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) International Conference. Organized by the Ministry of Water Resources, Ethiopia, and WEDC, UK, on the theme "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene." Contact Martine Morton, tel +44 (0)1509 222885, fax +44 (0)1509 211079, e-mail <wedc.conf@lboro.ac.uk>, website <www.wedcconference.co.uk>

18–29 May 2009, UN, New York (US) — Eighth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Tel +1 917 367 5100, fax +1 917 367 5102, e-mail <indigenous_un@un.org>, website <www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_eighth.html>

25–29 May 2009, Yaoundé (Cameroon) — Forest Tenure, Governance and Enterprise. Organized by the International Tropical Timber Organization, Rights and Resources Initiative, UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Cameroon Ministry of Forests and Wildlife. Contact Eduardo Mansur, tel +81-45-223-1110, fax +81-45-223-1111, e-mail <mansur@itto.or.jp>, website <www.itto.or.jp/>

27–29 May 2009, Dakar (Senegal) — eLearning Africa 2009. 4th International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training. Tel +49 (0)30 310 18 18 0, fax +49 (0)30 324 98 33, e-mail <info@elearning-africa.com>, website <www.elearning-africa.com/>

5 June 2009, Paris (France) — 9th International Economic Forum on Africa. Organized by the Development Centre of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Contact Sala Patterson, tel. +33 (0)1 45 24 96 46, e-mail <sala.patterson@oecd.org>, website <www.oecd.org/dev/africanforum>

24–25 June 2009, Kigali (Rwanda) — HIV/AIDS Training and Capacity Building Conference: Trends and Challenges. Involving policy makers, researchers, activists and practitioners from Eastern and Southern Africa. Contact Carol Maringa, tel +254 203 872 201/ +254 203 872 129/ +254 203 871 016, e-mail <rcentre@ratn.org>, website <www.ratn.org>

8–10 July 2009, Island of La Maddalena (Italy) — Group of Eight Summit 2009. Tel +39 06 6820 40 90, e-mail <redazione@g8italia2009.it>, website <www.g8italia2009.it>

14–17 July 2009, Johannesburg (South Africa) — Africa Mining Congress 2009. To explore alternative ways of attracting investment amidst the economic downturn. Contact Brian Shabangu, tel +27 11 463 6001, fax +27 11 463 6903, e-mail <brian.shabangu@terrapinn.co.za>, website <www.terrapinn.com/2009/miningza/index.stm>

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

10–11 March 2009, Rome (Italy) — 5th Annual Meeting of the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ICA). Focused on the impact of the international financial crisis on Africa and attended by representatives of G-8 governments, multilateral agencies, African institutions, Chinese funding organizations, the Arab Fund Coordination Group and India. Contact Carlo Schillaci <accreditamentostampa@esteri.it>, website <www.icafrica.org>

AFRICA BOOKS

Quelles alternatives pour l'Afrique? by Momar Sokhna Diop (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2008; 182 pp; €18)

Smart Aid for African Development by Richard Joseph and Alexandra Gillies (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, USA, 2008; 306 pp; hb $59.95, pb $24.50)

The Trouble with Aid: Why Less Could Mean More for Africa by Jonathan Glennie (Zed Books, London, UK, 2007; 192 pp; hb £40, pb £12.99)

L'Afrique au secours de l'Afrique by Sanou Mbaye (Editions de l'Atelier, Paris, France, 2009; 159 pp; €14.90)

Un autre monde à Nairobi: Le Forum social mondial 2007 entre extraversions et causes africaines, eds. Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle and Johanna Simeant (Karthala, Paris, France, 2008; 276 pp; €22)

Can We Afford the Future? The Economics of a Warming World by Frank Ackerman (Zed Books, London, UK, 2008; 160 pp; hb £55, pb £12.99)

Kenya's Quest for Democracy: Taming Leviathan by Makau Mutua (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, USA, 2008; 331 pp; hb $65)

Diamonds, Dispossession and Democracy in Botswana by Kenneth Good (James Currey, Oxford, UK, 2008; 192 pp; £12.95, $27.95)

L'innovation pour le développement by Blandine Laperche (Karthala, Paris, France, 2008; 252 pp; €26)

Innovation Africa: Enriching Farmers' Livelihoods, eds. Pascal C. Sanginga, Ann Waters-Bayer, Susan Kaaria, Jemimah Njuki and Chesha Wettasinha (Earthscan, London, UK, 2008; 384 pp; pb £29.95, hb £85.00)

Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed, ed. William F.S. Miles (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, USA, 2007; 221 pp; hb $52.50)

Reconstructing the Third Wave of Democracy: Comparative African Democratic Politics by Rita Kiki Edozie (University Press of America, Lanham, MD, USA, 2009; 220 pp; pb $32, hb $62)

Do Bicycles Equal Development in Mozambique? by Joseph Hanlon and Teresa Smart (James Currey, Oxford, UK, 2008; 256 pp; hb £45, $90)

Le génocide voilé: Enquête historique by Tidiane N'Diaye (Gallimard, Paris, France, 2008; 253 pp; €21.50)

Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria by Brian Larkin (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, USA, 2008; 313 pp; pb $23.95, hb $84.95)

Lomé: Dynamiques d'une ville africaine, eds. Ph.Gervais-Lambony and G.K. Nyassogbo (Karthala, Paris, France, 2008; 336 pp; €25)

International Water Security: Domestic Threats and Opportunities by Nevelina I. Pachova, Mikiyasu Nakayama and Libor Jansky (United Nations University Press, Tokyo, Japan, 2008; 308 pp; pb $35)

Living with Bad Surroundings: War, History, and Everyday Moments in Northern Uganda by Sverker Finnstrom (Duke University Press, Durham, NC, USA, 2008; 304 pp; pb $22.95)

Le modèle de développement Ivoirien: Mirage ou utopie partagée? by Georges B. Toualy (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2008; 214 pp; €20.50, FF134)

Nigeria's Stumbling Democracy and Its Implications for Africa's Democratic Movement by Victor Ogueji ofor Okafor (Praeger Security International, CT, USA, 2008; 208 pp; hb $75)

Raila Odinga: An Enigma in Kenyan Politics by Babafemi Badejo (Yintab Books, Lagos, Nigeria, 2006; 384 pp ; pb £24.95)

Sustainable Investing: The Art of Long-Term Performance by Cary Krosinsky and Nick Robins (Earthscan, London, UK, 2008; 272 pp; hb £19.99)

African Women's Unique Vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS: Communication Perspectives and Promises by Linda K. Fuller (Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, UK, 2008; 328 pp; hb $89.95)

AFRICA WATCH

WATER

Africa facing greater 'water stress,' says UN

Rising demand from growing populations, changes in food consumption and increased energy production, including biofuels, is badly straining the world's water resources, warns the UN's third *World Water Development Report*. By 2030, according to the March report, nearly 50 per cent of the world's population will be living in areas of high "water stress," in which demand far exceeds the supply of water. Already by 2020, between 75 and 250 million people in Africa may experience increased water stress, in large part due to climate change, says the report, which was produced by over 20 UN agencies, led by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Water must be given a higher priority on the development agenda and developing countries themselves need to increase investment in water, UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura told the Fifth World Water Forum, which met in Istanbul, Turkey, from 16–22 March. Decrying insufficient investment in water resources, Mr. Matsuura warned that if left unattended the problems arising from increased demand on water resources could become insurmountable.

Water and sanitation issues are crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of reducing by half, by 2015, the percentage of people without access to safe drinking water or basic sanitation, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang told the Forum. Scaling up investment in water resources is particularly important for sub-Saharan Africa. With some 340 million people lacking access to safe drinking water, the region is the only one not on track to meet that element of the MDG target, according to the *Water Development Report*. Half a billion people in Africa also lack adequate sanitation, the report says. With many other regions also trailing behind, current efforts will need to be doubled if the sanitation goal set by world leaders is to be met.

In Africa, overall economic losses due to lack of access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation amount to some US$28.4 bn a year, the report estimates. Moreover, 10 per cent of all illnesses worldwide could be avoided by improving water supply and sanitation, the report points out. ■

DRUG TRAFFICKING

African Union, UN in joint anti-drug fight

The UN and the African Union (AU) are strengthening cooperation to battle the growing problem of drug trafficking. Under the new initiative, announced in March, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) will provide support to the AU's Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention in making policy, setting norms and building capacity.

Support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will be a particular focus. The region has seen a sharp rise in drug trafficking in recent years. "West Africa is under attack," with drug trafficking presenting a major security threat, the UNODC said in a paper prepared for this year's session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. "Few economic activities in West Africa, aside from oil extraction, have the economic weight of cocaine trafficking," the UNODC said in a report prepared last year.

According to the report, seizures of cocaine in the West Africa region — the main drug trafficked — have exploded from 95,000 kilograms in 2002 to nearly 6.5 mn kilograms in 2007. But resources to combat drug traffickers or to share information remain very limited. Regional cooperation, backed by international support to help strengthen law enforcement, is essential, the UNODC says. In October, ECOWAS ministers met to agree on a region-wide action plan to combat trafficking. The European Union is also supporting the AU and ECOWAS plans. ■

APPOINTMENTS

AD

The Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has elected Mr. **Kanayo F. Nwanze** of Nigeria as its next president. Mr. Nwanze, who was previously the vice-president of IFAD, will serve in the position for four years. He has nearly 30 years of experience in agriculture, rural development and research in Africa and Asia, including as director-general of the Africa Rice Centre (formerly the West African Rice Development Association) from 1996 to 2006.

UN / Evan Schneider

The UN Secretary-General has appointed Mr. **Joseph Mutaboba** of Rwanda to head the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). At the time of his appointment, Mr. Mutaboba was the Rwandan president's special envoy to the Great Lakes Region. During a long career in diplomacy and foreign affairs, he also served as secretary-general in the Rwandan Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Internal Affairs, as a senior diplomat in Addis Ababa and Washington, and as Rwanda's permanent representative to the UN. In the Guinea-Bissau post, he replaces Mr. Shola Omoregie, who retired in December 2008.

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Mr. **Christopher Ross** of the US has been appointed by the UN Secretary-General as his personal envoy for Western Sahara. Mr. Ross has had a long career with the US Department of State specializing in Middle Eastern and North African affairs, including as US ambassador to Syria and Algeria and director of the American Cultural Center in Fez, Morocco. He replaces Mr. Peter van Walsum of the Netherlands.

The UN Secretary-General has appointed Mr. **Michael von der Schulenburg** of Germany as his executive representative for the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). He has had a long career with the UN, including long-term assignments in Haiti, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq.